2017-2018

A YEAR IN REVIEW

CANADA'S STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Canada

The past year has been defined by many powerful stories spearheaded by survivors and their families. Movements such as **MeToo** and **TimesUp**, as well as the **global Women's Marches**, have shone a spotlight on the ongoing challenges faced by survivors, as well as the harsh realities that continue to hold all of us back.

Today, I am proud to report on our progress to date — and recognize the tremendous efforts of communities and individuals — as we mark the first anniversary of **It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence** (GBV).

In 2016, our government was mandated to develop and implement a GBV strategy. I am proud to say we have done just that. My predecessor, the Honourable Patty Hajdu, spent many months travelling from coast to coast to coast listening to Canadians — from academics and experts, to front-line service workers, to survivors themselves. What resulted was a whole-of-government approach to ending GBV informed by grassroots activism and feminist action.

Since 2017, we have invested nearly **$200 million** to implement actions under the Strategy's three pillars: **prevention**, **support for survivors and their families**, and **promotion of responsive justice and legal systems**. Examples of some of these actions include 40,000 pledges to end GBV; 7,000 new and repaired shelter beds across Canada; Criminal Code changes to clarify aspects of sexual assault law relating to consent, as well as intimate partner violence offenses; and launching the first ongoing national survey on GBV in Canada. New investments in Budget 2018 focus on preventing teen dating violence, enhancing and developing preventative bullying and cyber bullying initiatives, equipping health professionals to provide appropriate care to victims, among other actions. We have also changed the way we deliver funding by creating funding opportunities that are more accessible and sustainable for organizations, and are addressing gaps in supports for underserved groups, such as Indigenous women, LGBTQ2 peoples, women with disabilities, and other populations.

As we move forward, I wish to thank everyone who has contributed — and continues to dedicate their time and energy — to ending GBV in Canada. This includes the hard work of the members of my Advisory Council on the Strategy to Prevent and Address GBV. As we embark on the next year, I remain grateful for the courage of survivors and the work of the many ardent activists and advocates on the frontlines, whose legacies we honour and build upon. I look forward to continuing to work together to put a stop to GBV in Canada.

The Honourable **MARYAM MONSEF**, P.C., M.P.
L'honorable **MARYAM MONSEF**, C.P., députée

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

2017-2018

A YEAR IN REVIEW

IN 2017, the Government of Canada launched **It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence**. The Strategy became the first in Canadian history to put in place a federal action plan to end gender-based violence (GBV).

The Strategy is a whole-of-government approach to prevent and address GBV—a term used to describe violence directed at individuals because of their gender, gender identity or perceived gender—that builds on federal initiatives already underway and coordinating existing programs.

Since the Strategy's launch, movements such as **MeToo** and **TimesUp** have shone a spotlight on the work being done by countless advocates and activists working to prevent and address GBV across Canada and globally. Both worldwide and in local communities, a renewed and growing focus on gender equality is resulting in increased awareness of harmful attitudes and behaviours. Issues of sexism, misogyny, and GBV have moved to the forefront of public discussion.

One year later, here is what the Government of Canada has accomplished across the **Strategy's three pillars** to set the foundation for Canada's action plan to end GBV. Though work is ongoing, significant progress has been made in the first year of the Strategy. This report includes activities that were initiated as part of the Strategy, in addition to other actions across the federal government.

ADVISORY COUNCIL TURNS TWO

In June 2016, the **Advisory Council on the Strategy to Prevent and Address GBV** was announced. Since then, Council members have lent their valued expertise and frontline experience to inform the Strategy's priorities and its implementation.

CANADA'S STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

THE STRATEGY
is the first federal strategy to address all forms of violence, through a gender and intersectional lens
builds on current federal efforts and seeks to align with provincial/ territorial initiatives related to GBV
will fill gaps in knowledge and provide supports for diverse, underserved, and often marginalized populations
coordinates all federal actions related to GBV, through a new Knowledge Centre on GBV, housed within Status of Women Canada (SWC)
is based on three pillars: prevention, support for survivors and their families, and the promotion of responsive legal and justice systems

PILLAR 1

PREVENTION

GBV grows out of a culture that devalues women, girls and femininity, and holds misinformed views about other diverse populations including LGBTQ2 community members. Things such as sexist jokes, derogatory language and media messages that objectify women and girls further perpetuate these problematic beliefs.

With this in mind, adolescence is a key time to provide young people with the knowledge and skills to develop healthy relationships that are free from violence and abuse—especially when we consider that **nearly half (47%) of all sexual assaults are committed against young women aged 15 to 24**[1]. It starts with creating spaces for these conversations to take place, as well as raising awareness about the kinds of attitudes and behaviours that need to change.

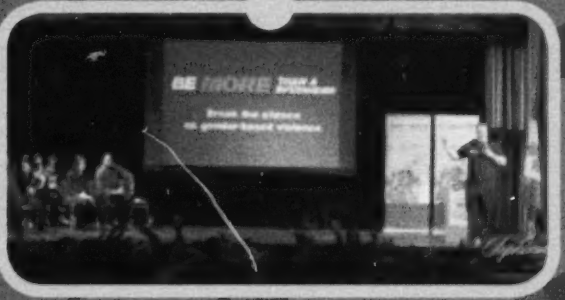
Getting to the root of, and eliminating, GBV is a long-term process. This year, in the effort to support positive social change, discussions with youth helped to provide direction for a national conversation to raise awareness about GBV. These discussions will help to guide the priorities and actions of the GBV Strategy, and ensure that the voices of Canada's future—its young people—are heard and respected.

1 Perreault, Samuel, 2015. Statistics Canada. Criminal victimization in Canada, 2014. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14241-eng.htm

PILLAR I: PREVENTION

#MYACTIONSMATTER

In November 2017, Status of Women Canada (SWC) successfully partnered with the **Canadian Football League** to engage thousands of Canadians to act to end GBV. The Minister of Status of Women joined players from the League to launch the **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence** at a local high school in Ottawa to raise awareness about the importance of bystander intervention. **Forty-thousand pledges to end GBV** were collected over the course of the 16 Days.



In December 2017, the **Public Health Agency of Canada** (PHAC) invited organizations to submit applications for projects to advance **programs and initiatives to prevent teen/youth dating violence**.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) Settlement Program is funding enhancements to organizations that deliver violence prevention training, workshops and place-based programming activities. Recently, the YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs developed comprehensive GBV training and outreach materials that were disseminated through train-the-trainer sessions with frontline staff and other community-based groups to ensure broad access to resources. GBV programming through the Settlement Program is also being delivered to clients through place-based services and referrals for newcomers.

YOUTH PULSE

In early 2017, members of the **Prime Minister's Youth Council** provided advice to SWC on themes for and ways of engaging youth in a conversation to change attitudes on GBV.

PILLAR II

SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

OVER the course of the last year, many survivors have come forward to share their stories about their personal experiences with GBV—including the families who participated in the community hearings/statement gatherings of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It has been a period of change marked by the supreme courage of these individuals in telling their stories.

The families of **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**, as well as the **MeToo** movement, have highlighted the need for improved supports for survivors and their families, as well as service providers, to better meet the diverse needs of various populations who have experienced GBV. As a result of recent disclosures, some sexual assault centres and other community organizations have seen a sharp uptake in demand for services.

Experts and stakeholders have been vocal about how the increase in demand has created additional challenges in terms of capacity and resources—something the Strategy has sought to address with the latest call for concepts under SWC's new GBV Program. The **Promising Practices to Support Survivors and their Families** call created a funding opportunity that is more accessible and sustainable for organizations than the traditional call for proposals. The solicitation process includes two-stages, whereby applicants who are successful in the concept stage will receive a small funding grant for the development of a full proposal. Eligible organizations can receive up to $1 million over five years for full project implementation.

Knowing that some populations living in Canada experience disproportionate levels of violence and face greater challenges to accessing services, the Strategy places survivors at its center. The Strategy is working with stakeholders to respond to and support the unique needs of survivors, including Indigenous women and their communities, and other underserved populations, such as those who are more at risk of GBV and/or are facing barriers to accessing services. These include, but are not limited to: children and youth, ethno-cultural women, LGBTQ2 communities and non-binary people, non-status/refugee/newcomer women, seniors, women living in an official language minority community, women living in northern, rural and remote communities, and women living with a disability.

PILLAR II: SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness announced over **$4,123,000 million in funding to the Canadian Centre for Child Protection** over five years, and **$857,000 annually thereafter**, to continue its vital work in protecting children from sexual exploitation on the Internet. Additionally, Public Safety Canada committed an additional $93,616 to establish a **survivors' network**, allowing victims to connect with one another and to create tailored support resources for survivors.

A diverse group of more than 50 women from every province and territory took part in the first **Pan-Canadian Voices for Women in Housing Symposium**. The symposium provided an opportunity to hear from women about their lived experiences, as well as current needs and barriers they face in accessing housing—including survivors fleeing intimate partner violence. The event was co-hosted by Status of Women Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and Employment and Social Development Canada.

The **National Housing Strategy**, launched by the CMHC, will help reduce homelessness and improve access to quality housing. As part of its focus to meet the needs of women and children fleeing family violence, 4,000 new and repaired shelter beds will be created or repaired for a total of 7,000. The Strategy will also:

- commit to a target of one third of the Strategy's investments to support projects that specifically focus on the unique needs of women and girls;
- prioritize women and children fleeing violence as one area of focus;
- conduct targeted research on women's housing needs;
- host an annual women's housing symposium to inform the evolution of the National Housing Strategy;
- continue to take a proactive approach to integrating gender-based analysis through the program cycle of the Strategy; and
- help reduce chronic homelessness by half over the next decade.

GBV PROGRAM CALL FOR CONCEPTS

SWC committed to invest $20 million to support the GBV sector to develop and implement promising practices to address gaps in supports for underserved survivors, including Indigenous women and their communities. After listening to experts, survivors, and stakeholders across the country in the summer of 2016, the Minister announced a call for concepts in January 2018 under its new GBV Program in order to strengthen the GBV sector to address gaps in supports for survivors.

"We are really happy to see that our advice is being heard and changes implemented in response. This new process will have a significant impact on many organisations and their ability to access much needed funding to identify gaps in supports for Indigenous and other underserved survivors and their families."

Nneka MacGregor
Executive Director of WomenatthecentrE and member of the Minister's Advisory Council on the Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence

National guidance, curriculum and resources are being funded by PHAC through the **Violence, Evidence, Guidance, Action (VEGA) Project** to enhance the ability of health and social service providers to respond safely to intimate partner violence, child maltreatment, and child exposure to intimate partner violence.

PHAC invested over $6 million, over five years, in delivery and testing of interventions to promote the health of survivors of child maltreatment and intimate partner violence.

In collaboration with provincial and territorial **Victim Services, Justice Canada** supported the development of Family Information Liaison Units (FILU) in each province and territory. FILUs provide a coordinated, culturally-grounded and trauma-informed team to work directly with family members of missing or murdered Indigenous women and girls to ensure they have access to all available information about their missing or murdered loved one.

INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

On June 5, 2018, the Government of Canada announced that the Commissioners of the **National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls** have until April 30, 2019 to submit their final report. The Government is also taking action to address the interim recommendations of the National Inquiry by increasing health support and victim services, establishing a commemoration fund, funding organizations with expertise in law enforcement and policing to lead a review of police policies and practices concerning their relations with the Indigenous peoples they serve, as well as supporting an RCMP National Investigative Standards and Practices Unit with additional funding.

In the spirit of reconciliation, the Strategy continues to put forward a range of actions to specifically address violence against Indigenous women and girls. Actions this year included:

- **Indigenous Services Canada** continued to collaborate with the CMHC to support the Budget 2016 commitment to expand the network of on-reserve shelters for those fleeing domestic violence. Planning and construction activities for new shelters in five different provinces have begun. These five additional shelters, anticipated to be completed by March 31, 2019, will be integrated into the existing network of 41 shelters serving women and children living on-reserve, bringing the total to 46.
- **The Blanket Exercise**—a teaching tool to share the historic and contemporary relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada—was included by the RCMP in the training academy curriculum for all new officers.
- Beginning in spring 2018, **Status of Women Canada** is engaging with Indigenous stakeholders to identify gaps and priorities for research on GBV among Indigenous peoples.
- Status of Women Canada also established an **Indigenous Women's Circle** on May 23, 2018, to advise Status of Women Canada's actions on GBV among other issues.

Additional actions, such as the **RCMP's cultural competency training** and results of SWC's **GBV Program call for concepts**, are expected in year two of the Strategy.

PILLAR III

PROMOTING RESPONSIVE LEGAL AND JUSTICE SYSTEMS

A negative experience with police and other justice system professionals can bring more trauma to survivors, and discourage others from reporting these crimes. With rates of some forms of GBV, notably sexual assault, remaining stubbornly unchanged from 2004 to 2014[2], it is clear that more needs to be done. There is room for improvements to the ways in which the legal and justice systems respond to GBV. To help reduce the incidence of GBV and increase survivors' confidence in these systems, it is important to take the needs and experiences of survivors into account. This requires a shift towards more support for trauma-informed and culturally appropriate practices, and training and resources for a range of service providers and criminal justice system professionals.

Low reporting rates of sexual assaults across Canada remains a serious issue. For example, it is estimated that for every 100 sexual assaults in Canada, only five are reported to police (5%). The Government continues to consult with experts on best practices to improve reporting in these cases, including efforts taken by law enforcement and community groups to work together to better support survivors of sexual violence. For example, members of the Advisory Council on the Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence have worked, and continue to work, alongside the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to provide valued input on the RCMP's sexual assault review.

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2 Perreault, Samuel, 2015. Statistics Canada. Criminal victimization in Canada, 2014. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14241-eng.htm

PILLAR III: PROMOTING RESPONSIVE LEGAL AND JUSTICE SYSTEMS

IMPROVED TRACKING AND REPORTING OF SEXUAL ASSAULTS

Status of Women Canada provided nearly **$500,000 in funding to OCTEVAW** to adapt the "Philadelphia Model" and pilot the approach in eleven Ontario communities, as well as seven in Atlantic and Western Canada. These projects will help in the tracking and reporting of sexual assaults by law enforcement authorities. The "Philadelphia Model" is a promising practice that involves experts from outside of law enforcement agencies being given secure access to police case files for review. This type of external case review allows the external experts to draw the police service's attention to any worrying trends in their department's investigation of sexual assault cases. Additionally, the Department of Justice, through its Victims Fund, provided $30,000 in funding to the Amelia Rising Sexual Assault Centre in North Bay who will work in collaboration with the North Bay Police Service to adapt the Philadelphia Model in that community.

The RCMP reviewed 2,225 sexual assault case files—and counting—after The Globe and Mail's "Unfounded" series was published. Following their report The Way Forward: **The RCMP's Sexual Assault Review and Victim Support Action Plan**, the RCMP has committed to forming a national unit to provide training, guidance and oversight for sexual assault investigations, and to work with Divisions to establish investigation review committees, where appropriate, to provide advice and guidance on sexual assault files.

As a partner to the **Federal Family Violence Initiative** (FVI), the RCMP receives annual funding to distribute to RCMP detachments, non-profit community organizations as well as municipal, provincial and territorial partners to support communities in responding to family violence. The RCMP Family Violence Initiative Fund (FVIF) aims to foster prevention efforts in communities, support conferences, seminars, presentations or workshops that help promote public awareness about relationship and family violence, as well as activities that assist victims of family and relationship violence; and initiatives that promote Sexual Assault Investigators training. In February 2018, the RCMP announced the official call for applications for FVI funding consideration.

In June 2017, **Bill C-16** received Royal Assent. This bill includes gender identity as a prohibited ground for discrimination under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. It also includes violence motivated by gender identity as a form of hate crime under the *Criminal Code*.

In January 2018, a collaboration between the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC), and Prisoners' Legal Services (PLS) resulted in changes to the way **transgender offenders are accommodated in Canada's federal prison system**.

The Government of Canada introduced **Bill C-51**, an *Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Department of Justice Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act*, which proposes a number of reforms that seek to **clarify and strengthen Canada's sexual assault laws**.

The Government of Canada introduced **Bill C-75**, an *Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*, which proposes a number of reforms to **enhance victim safety** and to clarify and strengthen criminal laws in the context of **intimate partner violence** (IPV) **and sexual assault**.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) made over $12 million available over three years under **the federal Victims Fund** for projects designed to improve the criminal justice system's responses to sexual assaults against adults. This funding was made available to provinces and territories, municipal governments, First Nations, criminal justice professional organizations and non-governmental organizations. Four provincial governments used this funding to establish or enhance pilot projects to provide independent legal advice to survivors of sexual violence.

Budget 2017 announced increased funding of $2.7 million over five years and $500,000 per year afterwards to the **Canadian Judicial Council**, which includes funding for judicial education, ethics and conduct. In 2017, the DOJ provided nearly $100,000 in additional funding to the National Judicial Institute to develop education for all judges that will focus on gender-based violence, including sexual assault and domestic violence.

DOJ hosted a **Knowledge Exchange on the criminal justice system's responses to sexual assault against adults**. This event provided a forum to discuss current experiences associated with reporting, charging and prosecution rates of sexual assault, and examined promising practices from within Canada and other common law jurisdictions.

Employment and Social Development Canada published ***Harassment and Sexual Violence What We Heard Report***, and is spearheading Bill C-65, which amends the Canada Labour Code to ensure that federally regulated workplaces, including Parliament Hill, are free from harassment and sexual violence.

DOJ commemorated Victims and Survivors of Crime Week 2018 from May 27, 2018 to June 2, 2018. The theme for this year's **Victims and Survivors of Crime Week** was Transforming the Culture Together. The topic of the federal symposium held on May 28, 2018, to launch the week was GBV. Plenary presentations and workshops related to topics such as intimate partner violence, sexual violence and violence against members of the LGBTQ2 community were included on the agenda.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

WHEN the **GBV Knowledge Centre** (KC) is launched in the fall of 2018, it will be the focal point of the Strategy and is responsible for coordination, data and research, reporting, and knowledge mobilization on GBV-related content.

To ensure that interested individuals, organizations and communities are able to access timely, relevant information and evidence, the KC will compile resources and research into a single platform. The KC will also provide a searchable online platform, which brings together existing data and evidence from a variety of sources about experiences of GBV and ways to prevent and address it, as well as links to government funding opportunities. After the KC is launched, it will continue to evolve, based on the ongoing feedback received from its users, as well as continue to expand to include more varied sources of information and tailored knowledge mobilization tools.

We need to understand the diverse experiences of people living in Canada who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing GBV in order to prevent and address it. While important work has been done to advance knowledge on GBV, there still remains data gaps on topics such as patterns of intimate partner violence, the experiences of diverse populations, and on issues such as female genital mutilation/cutting, technology-assisted violence and dating violence. Without this information, we remain unable to fill the necessary gaps in knowledge and support.

To fill these gaps, SWC is collaborating with Statistics Canada on three national surveys, which will result in much needed data and information on sexual harassment and gender-based violence in public and private spaces, post-secondary environments and workplaces. SWC is also developing its qualitative research agenda—to delve deeper into people's lived experiences—, as well as exploring partnerships with Indigenous research and data collection organizations to establish and implement a plan to collect GBV data on reserve.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

The first ongoing national survey on GBV in Canada was launched in April 2018 with initial reports expected by 2019.

Critical gaps in the state of knowledge on GBV were advanced through Statistics Canada releases in key areas and among vulnerable populations, such as the victimization of women with disabilities, immigrants, and visible minorities; cyberstalking; police-reported sexual assaults; and self-reported sexual assaults.

Initiatives to better understand the state of the problem and potential solutions were advanced, such as the Public Health Agency of Canada's intervention research related to promising practices to advance healthy teen/adolescent dating.

MOVING FORWARD

AS the Strategy moves forward, it's up to all of us to take hold of the incredible momentum and cultural shift underway. This is a unique opportunity to enact real change that will make a meaningful difference in the lives of diverse populations, including women and girls, both living in Canada and abroad. Most recently, Canada's 2018 G7 Presidency worked actively to promote the rights of women and girls and address issues related to sexual and gender-based violence, particularly by ensuring unanimous G7 support for the *Charlevoix Commitment to End Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Abuse and Harassment in Digital Contexts*, which focused on prevention, protection and prosecution of technology facilitated sexual and gender-based violence. Though there is still much work to be done, it is encouraging to see that action is being taken across various industries, sectors, and levels of government at home and on the world stage.

Canada has a long history of pushing for greater gender equality. From the suffragettes to the Indigenous women who spurred action to launch the National Inquiry, feminist action has played—and continues to play—a pivotal role in shaping our history. As we enter into year two of the Strategy, the Government will continue to work in partnership with frontline advocates and activists for greater awareness, greater action, and greater momentum to end GBV.

Canada